

**Minutes**  
**West St. Paul Environmental committee**  
**January 7, 2015**  
**West St. Paul Municipal Center-Administrative Conference Room**

**1. ROLL CALL**

Committee members in attendance: Andy George, Chris Gevara, Megan McGuire, Jessica Vanella-Friendshuh, Paul Larsen, John Margot, Jamie Nikolai, Sheila Williams-Ridge

Non-voting members present: Bob Gausman, Dave Schletty

Committee Members excused: Jon Thompson

**MINUTES**

The minutes from the November 5, 2014 meeting were approved by the committee with this change:

- On page two, sixth paragraph, add the word, “with” after, “Bee keepers deal...”

**2. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Adopt Rules of Order**

**After some discussion, a motion was made to adopt the Rules of Order. The motion carried. All Ayes. By secret ballot, Andy George was elected Chair and Megan McGuire was elected Vice Chair.**

Assistant Director Schletty told committee members that the new city website has a different format for the committee agendas. He asked committee members to sign up for the Environmental Committee meeting agenda to automatically be sent to their email address.

**b. 2015 Arbor Day Environmental Fair**

Committee members discussed the coming Arbor Day Event. The event will have the same format as last year. The City of West St. Paul will have tables at the Garlough School Environmental Fair. Members Chris Gevara and Jessica Vanella-Friendshuh volunteered for the subcommittee, long with most likely Jon Thompson. The event will be on May 8, 5:00-7:30 pm. Garlough does the “bulk of the work.” A subcommittee member meets with Garlough School to coordinate. Last year the committee table had a spinning prize wheel from Dakota County. The committee distributed sixty trees. The committee also gave out recycling information bags.

Invitations from the city to interested parties (for example, the University of Minnesota Monarch Club) should be sent in February. Other suggestions for tables included Mississippi Market and the “Bee Squad lady.” The Garlough

Environmental Fair is “kid” centered; once the reconstruction of Harmon Park is finished, the city can have sponsor a more adult-focused fair. Participants would include companies like Willwerscheid Funeral, (natural burial services.) The Arbor Day event will be an agenda item for the February committee meeting. George suggested getting Xcel to host a table for energy efficiency. Another table could be used for Emerald Ash Borer, (EAB).

### **3. OLD BUSINESS**

#### **a. EAB Plan**

Schletty presented the EAB plan. Dakota County is presently under quarantine for EAB, along with Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. (Eagan had already reported an EAB finding in Lebanon Hills last December.) EAB is mostly likely already in West St. Paul. Once it is discovered, EAB will remain about 5-7 years and then go away. Council has been briefed on EAB. Forty percent of the city boulevard trees are ash trees. There is a large number of privately-owned ash trees. (The city will eventually do an inventory of park trees along the parts of the parks that are mowed.) The city would like to take a proactive approach with a ten-year plan.

A committee member asked about the tree inventory. The city has 1,300 ash trees. There is also a high percentage of maple trees (thirty percent of the population.) Removal cost per tree would be two hundred dollars; it would also cost two hundred dollars to replace one tree. The total cost (just for boulevard trees) would be about 500 thousand dollars. Schletty will ask for about one/tenth of that for EAB budget. Gausman commented that “we are on the spear point of this issue and in a position of leadership. Minnesota has the most ash trees, particularly black ash trees, which are very susceptible to EAB.

A committee member asked about the current budget for boulevard trees. Schletty said that a lot of boulevard tree work is done in house. The city currently spends about 6-8 thousand dollars per year for boulevard trees. Schletty recommends doubling that budget. George asked if this plan would be the 10-year plan in front of Council. Schletty said yes. Council would review/adopt this plan at their next meeting.

The plan talks about boulevard trees, public trees (park, golf course) and privately owned trees. There are different options for prevention/treatment. The city could treat only the large ash trees that the city would like to preserve. Schletty will also look at training city staff to do trunk injections. Margot asked about trunk injection and base immersion treatment. A committee member argued against the immersion option because other organisms/pollinators would be affected. (Private owners could use either option.) The city will only use trunk injection. Gausman said that if you treat the trees for a 12-15 year period, the EAB would leave and then you will have saved the trees.

Schletty continued that any tree under a 12- inch diameter, staff can handle; anything above 12-inch diameter would be handled by an outside contractor. Not all trees on the boulevard will be replaced; it is dependent on factors like water lines and driveway access. Trees could be planted in another location. A committee member asked about the tree inventory for the entire city on GIS for a more holistic approach [to diversify the tree population.] Schletty agrees but the city has not been able to get a report from the GIS for the tree inventory. He is working on it with Dakota County.

Schletty said that staff will obviously not plant ash trees in public [zones]; they will look for poor quality trees, evaluate them and probably girdle them in the spring and inspect them again in the fall. Trees affected in heavily wooded areas will be left alone; along trails, they will be removed by staff. (They will become very brittle and a safety concern.) Trees in mowed areas will be replaced.

Margot pointed out that the city may need more money later on [when the EAB infestation gets worse.] Schletty said that the committee could adjust the budget year by year, [staying within the 10-year budget.]

Private property trees will be affected by city ordinance. The ordinance has not yet been adopted by Council. (The ordinance language is there but not yet adopted by Council.) Basically, the new ordinance will tell residents to monitor/treat their trees. Residents will look at different options for treatment. It will be stressed that city staff will not inspect privately-owned trees. Schletty will have this information posted on the city website (along with information from the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture.) The ordinance will also prohibit new construction from planting ash trees. Prompt removal of ash trees will be top priority. Ash will need to be disposed of following state guidelines. (District Heating may want the infected ash wood.) The city will try to avoid removing affected trees from May until July. (Removal during this time period would invite more EAB.)

Gausman has talked to various arborists/foresters from other states regarding EAB. He gave the information to Schletty.

The committee would like a one page summary of the EAB plan.

**George made a motion to commend Assistant Director Schletty on his work on the EAB plan and to present it for approval before Council. The motion carried. All Ayes.**

#### **4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

##### **a. Recycling Subcommittee**

George reported that he presented the committee's recommendations to Susanna Wilson. He will follow up with her and report to the committee in the next meeting.

The committee will discuss single stream recycling for West St. Paul residents at a later time.

**5. OTHER/MISCELLANEOUS**

**No miscellaneous items were added.**

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business before the Committee and with no objections, the Environmental Committee meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon G. Hatfield